

## Testimony on Senate Bill 5 (as introduced)

## Marriage and Family Therapists

September 24, 2008

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I am Linda Burghardt, Governmental Relations Director, for the Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, which represents almost 8,000 licensed social workers in the State. The Chapter does not support Senate Bill 5, which, as introduced, would expand the scope of practice for licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs) to include psychotherapy with individuals and diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders.

LMFTs who also are licensed as social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists are already authorized to provide services to individuals under these other professional licenses. The Chapter does not believe that LMFTs who are not also licensed as social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists have the education, training, and experience necessary to be qualified to provide individual therapy solely under the LMFT license. By definition, marriage and family therapy focuses on relationships between family members or marital partners, rather than on individuals. Further, the Chapter does not believe that LMFTs receive the necessary training and education to diagnose, assess, and treat mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, which, in the extreme, can be life-threatening. We, therefore, do not support any expansion of LMFT scope of practice to allow therapy with individuals or the diagnosis, assessment or treatment of the various disorders.

Please feel free to contact us if you would like to further discuss our position on this bill. I can be reached at 517-487-1548 x 101 or at [Burghardt@nasw-michigan.org](mailto:Burghardt@nasw-michigan.org). Our executive director, Maxine Thome, can be reached at 517-487-1548 x 104 or at [Thome@nasw-michigan.org](mailto:Thome@nasw-michigan.org).

Thank you for allowing me to speak today on Senate Bill 5.